

PRECES & LACHRYMÆ,

OR, THE

Prayers and Tears

OF THE

City and Country;

BEING A

Representation of the State and present Condition of the Dissenters, in their Complaints, Expostulations, Supplications and Resolutions.

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*Ubi invaluit usus controversus de Religione Gladio dirimendi, qualiscumque Doctrina sit posita in populo, quisquis Doctrina ei adversari ausus sit fuerit, sine jure sine impunia, omnino Sacerdos habetur, & quæcunque aut ex Divinis liti est testimonia, aut argumenta attulerit, ad ea omnia unus respondebit Carnifex. Jacobus Recont. In stratag. Satanae. Lib. 3. p. 147.*

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L O N D O N,

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# The Introduction.

1. **W**HEN the Servants and Disciples of the Son of God, were Slandered, Reproached and Persecuted by the Jews and Heathens, in the first Age of Christianity, they thought it a Duty owing to Themselves, their Religion and the Holy God that was the Author of it, to wipe off those Slanders and Imputations, and to maintain and defend their Innocency against the Injustice and Cruelty of their Persecutors. St. Paul vindicates himself, sundry times from the Calumnies and Slanders of the Jews, as is evident in the Acts of the Apostles, and several Apologetical Discourses, may be read in his Epistles, as also in those of St. Peter. The Apologies that were written by Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Athenagoras on the behalf of Christians, are still Extant, known and read by learned Men: Of the same Nature are Cyprian to Demetrianus, Augustin de Civitate dei. Arnobius contra Gentes.

2. We do not remember that we have either heard or read that they were denied the Liberty of Complaining, or asserting their Innocency, and the barbarous Injustice, of their Persecutors. Those that Prosecuted them were Persons sufficiently Inhumane, yet they never forbid, or punished them, for avowing their own Integrity, or groaning under the Rods, wherewith they made them bleed. 'Twas never Penal to be Sensible of their infelicities, nor to affirm themselves Upright, when they were Treated as Transgressors.

3. 'Tis not our purpose to affirm our Sufferings, equal with those of the Primitive Christians, or that we have the same Reasons of

*Complaint. We do readily acknowledg, that our Calamities are as much Inferiour to theirs, as are our Piety and our Virtues; and the comparison as Unequal on the one part as the other. But though these be not Equally great, with these of those Eminent and very Holy Persons: we think them severe enough to justifie a Complaint and unreasonable enough to allow an Accusation.*

4. *That our State and Condition is Calamitous can't be denied. Almost all the Cities, Towns and Villages, in England with witness can affirm it; All the Prisons, Courts and Tribunals in the Land will give their Suffrage to it; and they must live in great Privacy and Retirement, that do not sufficiently understand it, from their own knowledg and observation.*

5. *All manner of evil Things, are reported concerning us, and there is almost nothing Impious and Infamous, which is not laid to our Charge. The many Books and Pamphlets that are written; the many Sermons that are preached, before Judges, Magistrates, and Persons in Authority and Office; the daily Libels that the Press doth Spawn, on purpose to defame, and make us an abhorrence, are such evidence of it, as cannot be gaine said.*

6. *Our Case being such, we will take the liberty that was permitted to the Christians of Old, and hope we may do it with Impunity, we will presume that we may have Licence, to groan under our burdens, and expresse the sense we have, of the weight and uneasiness of them; we can't but feell the Severities that are exercis'd towards us, nor can we be without some Resentments of those horrid and mischievous Imputations, that with impudence, and face of Brags, are said to our Prejudice, and disadvantage. We will therefore, complaine of the Impositions and Burdens, that lye upon us; we will Expostulate with our Persecutors; we will in most Humble and Prostrate manner make our Supplications before them; and lastly avow our Innocency, and purposes of Perseverance therein, and this we intend to do, very briefly, and with a becoming Modesty, Freedom and Candour.*



( I )

CHAP. I

The DISSENTERS Complaints.

(To speak at first once for all, Take notice that I charge not every Church of England man with Malignancy, or such a Spirit of Persecution, nor that I go about to vindicate every single Dissenter.)

SECT. I.

1. **T**HE Terms of Communion imposed upon our Ministers and required of us, are of unnecessary nature, uncertain truth, and though true, yet impossible to be submitted to, by many, with understanding and judgment. Those among us that are Clergy-Men, are obliged in all publick holy Offices and Administrations, to wear the Surplice, Baptize with Godfathers, and the Sign of the Cross, give the Sacrament kneeling, and deny it to all such as refuse to receive it in that Gesture. But what necessity is there of these things? Were they imposed by Jesus Christ or his Apostles? Did St. Paul wear a Surplice, or St. Peter Baptize with the Sign of the Cross. Are these things Essential to Christian Religion? Cannot the Churches of God in this Nation, nay, cannot the Church of England subsist without the use and practice of them? If any man think so, let him enjoy his Opinion, we are not like to be his Converts. There were Churches in being before these things were known or observed, and we are of the mind there may be again when the use and memory of them may fail upon Earth.

2. The Minister that Conforms, is bound to affirm it certain by God's Word, That Children dying after Baptism, before the Commission of actual Sin, are certainly saved. Now that some Children so dying are certainly saved, we do heartily believe. We think, that the Promise is made to Believers and their Seed; and that the Children of Believing Parents that dye before actual sin are saved. But whether the Children of Atheists, Papists, Infidels and Heathens that are Baptised, and expire before actual Transgressions, are immediately advanced into the Kingdom and Presence of God, and Conversation of the Blessed, nothing of which we are not certain, nor can we find any Proof of in the Gospel. In the mean time we do not pretend to condemn, nor judge concerning them. We leave them to God who is their Judge, and deal righteously by them, and all the World besides.

3. That

3. That all the *Heathens* are damned, is *Virtually* asserted in the *Thirty Nine Articles*, (which all that are admitted to minister in holy things must subscribe) but of this we are not very sure, and we think that we have read that *Justin Martyr* and some others of the *Fathers*, were of other apprehensions in that Case: And there are some in this Age, as well as in those which have preceded, that have entertained *some hopes of the Salvation* of some of them. Mr. *Humsfrey* hath said many things with great consideration and judgment in favour of that Opinion, in his *peaceable Disquisitions*. And we do avow to all the World, that we do believe, that no man can be sure of their universal Damnation; and that to our apprehension 'tis more likely, that *Antoninus, Epicuretus, Plato, Plotinus*, and many others are in Heaven, than many of those that have been reputed Saints, and placed among the Blessed there. Not that any are saved without a *Saviour*, or sanctified without the Influences of the *Holy Ghost*. We do firmly believe, that there is no Name under Heaven given unto Men whereby they may be saved, but the Name of *Jesus of Nazareth*; but as there are many persons that do receive gifts of mercy, kindness and benevolence from unknown hands, so we humbly conceive the *Heathens* may receive pardon of sin from an unknown *Saviour*, and a holy and regenerate Nature from an unknown *holy Spirit*.

4. That the *Church* hath power to appoint *Ceremonies*, is also affirmed in the *Articles* thereof, but we see nothing that proves the indefinite truth of that Proposition. If by *Ceremonies* are meant the necessary circumstances of action, and as are by consequence, and involution commanded in, and with those actions and duties wherewithal they are involved we do easily grant it. But if thereby you mean Rites that are exhibitiv of *Grace*, yea, or significations of *Duty*, we must demur a little, for we think Christ Jesus the Law-giver of his Church, and that he hath given Laws enough for its Constitution and Administration. Besides we desire to know of what Extent this Power of the Church is, and what are the Limits of it: If it hath no Limits, then it may introduce a Yoke upon Christians, much more insupportable than what was laid upon the Jews; and yet that was such, (the Apostle affirms) as neither they nor their Fathers were able to bear, *Acts 15*. If it hath any bounds, we would fain understand who hath fixed, or who must determine them. If it be said that God hath set, and established them in his Word we do willingly assent unto it, and add farther that by the perfection and sufficiency of his Laws, we think he hath determined it to a Point, for to what purpose a needless and useles Power (and such it must be if Christ's Law be perfect) should be granted to the Church?

*Church*, we can not understand. If it be said that the *Church* it self must fix the *bounds* of its *Power*, 'tis much the same as if it were utterly without any. For 'tis to be supposed that they will affirm, that how numerous soever their *Ceremonious* Impositions be they go not beyond their power, and so farewell all Christian Liberty. Christ Jesus hath only purchased an Exchange, but no Freedom from a *Yoke of Bondage*. And truly we think the Exchange is to our prejudice, for 'tis more eligible to bear the burthen and impositions that a *wise and righteous God* doth lay upon us, than those that are laid upon us by *foolish and sometimes imperious and wicked men*.

5. 'Tis said in the beginning of the *Athanasian Creed*, that *whosoever will be saved* must believe the *Catholick Faith*, and that *whosoever* doth not keep it *whole and undefiled*, without doubt shall perish *everlastingly*: and in the conclusion 'tis determined, that if a man doth not faithfully believe the Doctrine thereof he cannot be saved. Which Doctrine, as also the damnatory Sentences affixed unto it must be subscribed by all that will serve God in the Work of Preaching the Gospel with the licence and favour of Authority. We do very vehemently assert the Deity of our *Saviour*; and that he is both God and Man in one Person; and that one in three, and and three in one is of the Essence of Christianity. But whether all that do not believe it in the sense and explication of *Athanasius* are certainly damned, seems to us very uncertain, and we are unwilling to avow the truth of it, lest we should condemn the Generation of the Just. We do believe that many thousands of Christians were saved before that *Creed* was known in the World; and we do not doubt but many might and would be saved though it should perish from among Men. We think it sufficient that the Doctrine of the Trinity, and Union of the *Divine* and *Humane* Natures in the Person of our Lord Jesus, be believed in those general and indefinite Terms under which 'tis expressed in the *Holy Scriptures*, and that *whosoever* believes it so (supposing him otherwise qualified for it) will certainly be saved; though he should not understand (as few plain Christians do) nor believe the Explanations of *Athanasius*.

6. Whether the *Explanatory* Doctrine of the Creed called by his Name (though written some Ages since his Death, as is thought by some learned Men) be *punitually true* we will not affirm, but this we will say, that if it be true, 'tis impossible that many, if not most, that do subscribe and avow the truth of it, should do it with understanding and conviction of judgment, and conscience. The Doctrine of the *Trinity* and *Personal Union*, according as 'tis there delivered, is Matter of such abstruse speculations, and Ministers matter for so many ob-

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*jections*, not easily to be answered, that we think it a mighty difficulty, for any man with Judgment and Satisfaction of mind, to subscribe to it, and impossible for those many unstudied Novices that take Holy Orders, and enter into the Church. They have neither *Parts* nor *Patience*, nor *preparatory Learning and Knowledge*, for the contemplation of so *sublime a Theory*; and there is no man that hath, with any seriousness, applied himself to such *Meditations* (we think) that will not easily conceive it.

7. 'Tis said in the Book of Ordination, that by reading old *Authors and Writers of the Church*, 'tis evident that there have been, even from the daies of the *Apostles*, three Orders in the Church, viz. *Bishops, Priests and Deacons*. Whether this Doctrine be true is not the business of these *Papers* to determine; but we will be so bold as to affirm that we think it scarcely possible, that most of those that do acknowledg the truth of it, should do it with judgment and steddy assurance of mind. There are men of good Learning, Reading, Age, and Consideration, that have professed great uncertainty and irresolution in the point. When they read what *Jerome* saies in his Commentaries on *Titus*, and in his *Epistle to Evagrius*, and other places of his Writings, they are ready to embrace a *Presbyterian* parity, and acknowledg no *Prelation* between *Bishops and Priests*, but what is either by consent or humane *Laws and Constitutions*. When they read other passages in that same Author, wherein he seems to contradict himself, they are inclined to acknowledge a *prelatical Episcopacy*. When they read the *Epistles of Ignatius and Cyprian*, they cannot deny a *Prelacy*: but whether it be a *Prelacy* in one and the same particular Church, or in and over the *Presbyters of many Churches*; and whether it be a *Divine or Humane* Appointment, they are not very much assured. And if those that have read and considered the point, cannot satisfy their minds, or come to a determination about it, how is it possible that such as never read, or thought almost any thing on that Subject (and such are most that enter the *Sacred Office*) can with Judgment and conviction of Conscience, subscribe the truth of it.

8. We have not here set down all those things that we think unnecessary, uncertain, and impossible to be consented to, with a satisfied understanding, in the terms of *Communion*, required by this Church, for then we must have written a *Volume*, whereas we intend only a few sheets. We have proposed some very few Examples, from amongst the many that might have been produced, had it consisted with our designed brevity. Whoever shall apply himself to the Consideration of them, will easily observe many others of like kind.



## SECT. II.

1. **T**HE Forms of *Subscription* and *Renunciation* that are required of us, are expressed in words too bold, indefinite, peremptory, and dogmatical. By the *Six and Thirtieth Canon*, all that are admitted to the Sacred Office are obliged *willingly* and *ex animo* to subscribe; That the *Book of Common Prayer*, and of ordering *Bishops, Priests and Deacons*, contain nothing contrary to the word of God; and that they allow and acknowledg the *Book of Articles*, being in number 39, to be agreeable to the Word of God. Betwixt Truth and Falshood there is no *medium*, that we know or understand. What is not contrary to the Word of God is of equal truth with it. What is agreeable thereunto, is as indisputable as the inspired Volumes. And *what* is this we pray, but to advance the Opinions and Determinations, the Books and Writings of solid men, to an equality of truth, with those that were written by the Inspiration and direction of the Holy Ghost.

2. We do profess, that we do not see, how *Subscription* can be made to any Translation of the *Holy Scriptures* in that Form of Words; for that there is *nothing* in any, even in the best Translations, contrary to the *Original Text*, or that all things in any one of them are agreeable thereunto, is we think a very bold and daring Assertion: Yea, we will add thus much farther, that we know not how any man can affirm concerning the *Original it self*, that it contains nothing contrary to what was written by the *inspired Authors*. That the *Greek and Hebrew Copies* have received no *change or variations*, is we think *impossible* to be proved; and those that shall compare the most *Ancient Translations* with the present *Original Copies*, will find, that if they had not read *otherwise* than *now* we do, it were *impossible* they should have *Translated* as they did. For proof of this, we must refer the Reader to *Ludovicus Cappelegus* his *Critica*, and Father *Simon* on that Subject, whose Book is lately Translated into the *English Tongue*. In the mean while, we intend not to disparage or invalidate the Authority of the *Original Text*. We do with very great assurance affirm, that the variations that may have happened therein, are not *material*, and that the *faith and manners*, the *hope and salvation* of men, can suffer no prejudice, nor run no hazards thereby.

## S E C T. III.

1. **W**E are not permitted to make *explications*, nor to declare our *sense* of the Subscriptions, Declarations, and Oaths that are imposed upon us. They are formed in *Ambiguous* Words, and such as are capable of *sundry acceptations*, but in which of them we *understand*, and could *take*, and *submit* unto them, we are not *allowed* to *say*. They must be *swallowed* in the lump, without any *chewing*. No *sense* of *favour* may be put upon them, though *sense* be sufficient to search the *Government*, and agreeable to the *Laws* of the *Land*.

2. That the *Conformable Gentry* and *Clergy* (we mean such as are men of *conscience* and *consideration*) do put a *favourable sense* and *interpretation* upon them, we are sufficiently assured by their *Books*, and the *Conversation* we have with some of them. And so *favourable*, *candid* and *ingenious*, is the *sense* they give of them, that might we be permitted to *declare* it, we our *selves*, at least very many of us, could submit unto them; but this is a *favour* that is not allowed us, 'tis an *indulgence* that hath not been granted us, nor for ought that we can *perceive*, is like to be.

3. Were we satisfied that we might take the required *Subscriptions*, *Declarations* and *Oaths* in our own *sense*, without declaring our *explication*, we might long since many of us have been *Conformists*, or might be suddenly so, but that is a thing in which we cannot be assured. If such a *Liberty* be taken we think the *Imposition*, and requiring of them will be of little *use*, or *signification*, because it is no great difficulty by *Interpretations*, and mollifying *expositions* in our minds, to enervate the *force*, and void the *obligation* of all the *Oaths* and *Subscriptions* in the *World*.

4. We know, that there is a *mean* betwixt a *rigorous*, *strict*, *severe*, and a *loose*, *vagant* and *licentious* *Interpretation*; but we do also know that 'tis no easie manner to find it; and that all men that may be concerned in such things, are not skilled in *splitting hairs*, or *dividing Atoms*, that persons of *tender* and *scrupulous Consciences*, will be everlastingly zealous lest they should *poise* the *Golden Mean*, and embrace the *loose* and *vagant* *sense* and *exposition*.



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5. If this *scrupulosity* of Conscience be a Fault, 'tis such as very good men are liable unto, and know not how to remedy it. To be afraid of sin, is (we are sure) a very *commendable quality*, and worthy of *encouragement and praise*. If any be *superstitiously* timorous, and fear where no fear is, we think them worthy of *pity and indulgence*, and that in *Impositions, Oaths and Subscriptions*, it ought to be remembered, that there are, and ever will be such men in the World, and therefore that such things be never required, but in Cases of *great and absolute necessity*, in *plain, obvious*, and necessary things; and that the forms in which they are proposed, be drawn with great *wariness and caution*, and expressed in words of *common use*, and as free as possible from all *ambiguity* of signification.

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## S E C T. IV.

1. **W**HEN the Doors of the Church are to us made impassable by the *Turn-Pikes* and *Port-Cullis* that are set before it, we are Excommunicated and delivered over to *Satan* because we do not come into it. This we must confess is an extraordinary method of proceeding. We find nothing of this nature in the Scripture, or in the practice of the *Primitive Church*. Nothing was required as antecedently necessary to *Church-Communion*, both *plain and simple Christianity*. There were no *Articles, Liturgy, or Book of Ordination* to be subscribed; There were no *Declarations, Oaths, or Objections* to be made to qualify persons for admission thereunto. Assent and Consent to the *Baptismal Covenant*, was then thought sufficient, and would be so still, if we that have less wisdom and understanding did not presume we have more, than the *Apostles and Primitive Christians*.

2. We do very easily acknowledge *Excommunication* a *sacred* and tremendous Ordinance, *summum futuri judicis prejudicium*, *Tertulian* calls it; and 'tis our Opinion, that when 'tis exercised, it ought to be done with *great gravity and seriousness, magno cum pondere, ut apud certos de Dei conspectu*; and upon very *weighty and important* reasons. To do it with an *inferiour trifling spirit*, and for *impertinent* and *invaluable* causes and pretences (as if the custom of these daies is to *prophane* it, and make it *cheap and contemptible*; and peradventure it may be a greater *Blasphemy* than some men are well aware of or do *duely* consider.

3. In the *Scripture* we find some persons put under this *divine Censure*, but it was for *great and obvious Transgressions* of the *divine Commandments* *St. Paul* judged the *incestuous Corinthian* to be delivered unto *Satan*; and he himself did so by *Himeneus* and *Philetus*: But the one had married his *Fathers Wife*, and the others had made *Shipwrack* of the *Christian Faith*. These men were a reproach to the *Christian Name*; and therefore it was their duty to dilown and reject them from their *Communion*.

4. In the *Primitive Church* we do also find men put under the Sentence of *Excommunication*; but it was usually for denying the Faith, and sacrificing to Idols: in Times of Persecution, or for delivering up the *Books* of the holy *Scriptures* into the *hands* of their *Enemies*, or for some other gross and scandalous Crimes. We do not find that they imposed *useless, unnecessary, uncertain, and controverted Doctrine*, as *terms and conditions* of *Church-Communion*, and then *Excommunicated* such as could not *consent* unto them. This was a *Practice* unknown in the *purest Ages* of the Church.

5. *Vistor* Bishop of *Rome* was the first *Undertaker* in this kind: (besides those that we read of, *Ac. 15.*) he would have imposed the *Romans* Custom, of observing *Easter* upon the *Asiaick Churches*; and because they refused it, he at least threatned them with *Excommunication*; for *Valesius* thinks he did not actually do it; and 'tis possible that the Letters of *Irenaeus* and others, might prevent the execution of his angry purposes and determinations.

6. What he threatned (supposing he went no farther) his *Successors* in that *See* have many a time performed. How many times have they *Excommunicated* persons and Churches for refusing their *impositions*, and rejecting their *useless, unnecessary, uncertain*, and sometimes *impious* Constitutions. How many Kingdoms have they interdicted, because they would not bare their *Yoke*, and submit to the *Empire* and *Dominion* of their *Laws*? The *Histories* of *Europe* will furnish *Instances* thereof enough to any man that desires to be informed concerning it.

7. We are sorry to see the present *Modes* and *waies* of proceeding in use among us. *Humane Appointments* and *Constitutions* are imposed upon us; things unnecessary and doubtful are required of us; and because we *refuse* them we are given up to the *Devil*, and truly our *Case* were sad, did we not *hope* for more *favour* from *God* than we do *receive* or *expect* from men. For we must stand before an other *Tribunal*, and have some hope to be acquitted there, though we be *condemned* here. *Multa etenim facta quae hominibus improbanda viderentur, testimonio tuo a domine approbata sunt. Aug. in confessionibus.*

## S E C T. V.

THE penal *Laws* are executed upon us with great *rage* and *indignation*, and there are scarcely any *executions* that are thought sufficiently severe. Should we enumerate our *sufferings*, the *History* of them would *swell* into sundry *Volumes*, which is not the *design* of this Discourse. We intend no full or *accurate* description of our *calamities*.

2. We are not ignorant, that those that *prosecute* us, think themselves sufficiently *justified* in all that they do against us by the Authority of the *Laws*, we are of another opinion, and so (we make no doubt) will they be *another day*. Those that persecuted the *Christians* in the *Primitive Times*, did it by the authority of the *Laws*, and so did they in *Germany* in the Reign of *Charles* the fifth; and in the *Low Countries* in the Time of *Duke Alva's* Government; and in *England* in the Reign of *Queen Mary*; and so do they now in *France* under the Rule of *Lewis* the 14th. that most *blessed Christian King*.

3. There are few *Protestants* (unless such as are ready to turn *Papists*) but will condemn those *persecutions* though they were directed by the *Laws*; and we think it no *easy* matter to justify the *prosecutions* that are made against us, although those that afflict us have the *Laws* to plead on their behalf. We think the *Laws* are no better than their *Authors*; and we are sure they were *men* subject to like *passions* with other *Mortals*, and never gave any evidence of *infallible* direction, or *inspiration* in the *contrivance* or making of them.

4. No *Laws* can justify *prosecutions* or *Prosecutors* but such as are just. Where they are unjust, those that suffer by them are the *innocent* persons, and those that prosecute them are the *Offenders*. 'Tis against the *Law* in *Spain* and *Italy* to read the *Bible* in the Language of those *Countries*; but those that persecute such as transgress that *Law*, are *incarnate Devils*, and those that are outraged and tormented by them, are therein *innocent*, and probably very good *Christians*. 'Twas against the *Law* to make any *Petition* to any *God* or *man* for the space of *thirty daies*, unless to *Darius* the King. Nevertheless, we esteem *Daniel* that transgressed the *Law* a much better man than any of them, that prosecuted him for the breach of it.

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5. The *Laws* require of us the practice of things *unnecessary* to subscribe to things *doubtful*, and not at all *essential* to the *Christian* Religion, to swear to *Propositions* doubted, if not denied by men of great learning and sobriety. the refusal of these things is *penal*, some of us are thereby disabled publickly to *preach* the *Gospel* and other to *attend* it: and if we preach or hear, or worship God in *private* in the Communion of more than *five*, besides the Family in which such *worship* is performed, we are expoed to punishments more than *many*, and those none of the *smallest* or *gentlest* kinds.

6. If the imposing things of *this* nature, to be *sworn*, *subscribed* and *declared*, and the punishing men for the *refusal* of them, and worshipping God by other *Laws* and *Methods*, than those prescribed by the *English Liturgy*, be just in themselves, or will justify our *Persecutors*, we despair of understanding any thing of the natures of *good* and *evil*. But of the unreasonableness, and *injustice* of impositions, and the *impossibility* of uniting the Church by them. See a little Book called the *Samaritane*.

## S E C T. VI.

**T**HOUGH the *Penalties* imposed on us by the *Laws*, be severe enough, yet did we seek *no* more than the *Law* directs, we should not have *so much*, nor *so many* reasons to complain, but alas, the *Laws* are not *keen* enough to wound us, nor *sharp* enough to draw *blood* to the satisfaction of our *enemies*, the Informers who are *insatiable* in their *malice*, their *hatred* and their *rage*. The little *fingers* of our prosecutors are *heavier* than the *Loins* of the *Law*; if the one *chastise* us with *Rods*, the other do *correct* us with *Scorpions*.

2. The old *musty Statutes*, that were made, and intended to the prejudice of the *Papists*, though seldom or never *executed* upon them, are turned by these Informers against us with *severity* and height of indignation, and we think we may safely say, that more true *Protestants* have been worried, ruined and *undone* by them in the space of half one year, than *Papists* in near an hundred. Those *Rods* that were made to scourge them are dipped in *Brine*, and laid on our backs with *strokes*, till the *flesh*, *blood* and *bones* appear. They easily escape the *Curse* of the *Statutes*, but we die *without mercy*, and can find no remedy from their vengeance. *Dat veniam corvis, vexat censura columbas.*

3. To which we will add, The *Laws* sometimes seen to be put upon Tents, and extended to such *uses* and *significations*, as is likely never entred into the *minds* of those that made them. Any *Comentary* is found and good, though it perverts the *Text*, provided it may serve the turn of our Enemies the *Informers*. And there is, almost, no *Statute*, that may not by a dextrous *ex, osition*, become an *instrument* of our ruine, as we find by very *dismal* experience, almost every day. These Men are marvelously *ingenious* to destroy us; and 'tis a strange *Law* indeed in which they can find nothing to *promote* it.

4. We have heard, or read, that in the dayes of our *Fathers*, it was thought a good *wholesom* rule, that *penal Laws* were to be construed in the most *favourable* sense, that the words were capable of bearing; but the men of *this age*, our *Prosecutors*, are of other perswasions, that old worm eaten *maxime* is now of no *value* or *reputation*, at least in such *cases* where we are concerned. The *severest* sense that can be put upon them, is the only *rule* and *measure* of interpretation, yea, senses *more severe* then can with any *reason* be affixed unto them, are esteemed very *laudable* Expositions. All senses are good with them that will do us *hurt*, and all *coments* lawful, that may be serviceable to our *calamity* and *affliction*.

## SECT. VII.

1. **WE** have been in some places punished for *faults* that we never *committed*, and prosecuted for our presence at *Conventicles* where we never were. This we think is hard *measure*, but 'tis no other than what we have had *experience* of.

2. Those men upon whose *Evidence* and *Oaths*, some of us have been convicted, are persons *viler* than the *Earth*, their *Fathers* we would have scorned to have set among the *Dogs* of our *Flocks*. They are the *dregs* of the *People*, and the *abhorrence* of all that know or have any *conversation* with them. Their *Debaucheries* have beggered and *impovertised* them to that degree, that they take up this trade. Their *Words* and their *Oaths* will not be taken, among their *Neighbours*, for a *Groat*.

3. We have heard or read, that according to our *Laws*, those that receive *Evidence* against any *subject* of the Realm, ought to consider the *quality* and *credibility* of him, or them that give it, and there seems to be a great deal of *reason* for it, for otherwise our *Estates*, our *Reputation*, and our *Lives*, are all at the mercy and in the disposal of all such *Varlets*, as have so much *need*, and so little *conscience*, as to make merchandize of them. How well this *good* and charitable rule hath been observed in those *testimonies* that have been taken against us, we are not willing to say.

4. It is readily granted that those *Gentlemen*, to whom these *Miscreants* offer their *Oaths* and *Depositions*, cannot refuse them, because they *themselves* become *criminal*, and liable to prosecutions at *Law* thereby. But we do humbly conceive, that when we appeal to the *Sessions*, which is a Court of *Judicature*, where they either are our *Judges*, our *Jury*, or both; the quality of the *Witnesses* and *Deponents*, ought to be considered, especially when we bring *evidence* sufficient to disable all their *attestations*.

## S E C T. VIII.

1. **W**E are ruined in our *Estates* and *Fortunes*; our Houses are broken up, the *Goods* and *Furniture* whereof are violently taken from us, and whatever we have any *propriety* in, is taken out of our *possessions*. Those that *spoil* us shew us no *mercy*, they are *inexorable* to all our *Intracacies* and *Complaints*. If we tell them that by the seizure and sale of our *Goods*, our *Persons* and *Families* are beggered, and brought to a morsel of Bread, 'tis to as good purpose, as if we discoursed to the same sense to the *Wolves* of the *Deserts*. What evidence they do give to others that they are *men*, we do not know, but we are able to infer it, from no other argument but their shape.

2. All the *Applications* that we make to them for *mercy* or *favour*, are rejected with insolent *pride* and *scorn*; the most modest and humble *Petitions* and *Supplications*, are received with *rage* and *indignation*. 'Tis a crime to beg any *abatement* or *remissions* of the utmost *severities* of the *Laws*; and some that have been *uneasie* and complained of the burden of them, we are inclined to think, will complain no more, having no mind to be lashed whilst they are raw.

2. The usual answer that is made to all the *Addresses*, that we make unto them, is this, *You are a company of factious Frenetiques, and you must bear the penalties of the Statutes*; and we have born them so long



long, some of us, that we can bear them *no more*. For how they will *destrain* upon those that have no *Goods*, we cannot easily understand, nor how the *mulets* will be paid by insolent *persons*, we are not able to *divine*.

4. We take no *pleasure* in these *Narrations*, and we hope we may be *believed*, when we say, that we are *sorry* that we have any *occasion* for them; but truth is truth, losers will talk. Those that are pinched will go near to complain. We are no *Stoicks*, we have not put off the *Passions* and *Affections* of *Humane Nature*, nor are we liketo do, tho, perhaps, we may have *reason* to wish it a thing *possible*.

## S E C T. IX.

1. **W**E are imprisoned and laid in *Goals* among *Rogues*. We are made (at least) *neighbours* to those that are the leers of the people. Our restraint is a *Calumny*, but the Neighborhood of these *Varlets*, make it much more heavy and *insupportable*. Their *swearing* and *blasphemy*, their *Midnight Revels* and *Debaucheries* (which we cannot cease to hear) are a perpetual *offence* unto us; and we think it a cruelty much like that of *chaining the Living* to the *Dead*.

2. 'Tis true sometimes we have *good company* more than we do desire, for we are thrown by *heaps* into Prisons and Places of Restraint. But though the presence of our *Friends* be pleasant, and their *Conversation* lovely, and we could heartily rejoice in it elsewhere; 'tis no solace to us to have them *Companions* in our Griefs, or *Cojartners* in our Calamities, and we should rejoice in their *liberty* though we our selves were bound.

3. If we survive our Imprisonment, (which we do not alwaies do) and return again to our *own houses*, we bring along with us the *foundation* of those *Diseases*, that in some space and tract of time do bring us to our *Graves*. The closeness of our *Lodgings*, the thickness, impurity, and corruption of the Air, the want of due *exercise* to move and agitate the *humors* of our Bodies, and preserve them from *stagnation*, overthrows our very *Crafs* and *Constitution*, and thence proceeds those *Diseases*, that no art can cure or remove.

4. Suppose that by *care* and *art* our Lives be a little prolonged, we are a burthen to our *selves*, and all that are about us. And whereas other men die but *once*, we die a *thousand times*, and as often stab to the heart all that have any kindness or *passion* for us.

## S E C T. X.

1. **W**E are represented as *Enemies* to the Government, and traduced as *illoyal* to our Prince. 'Tis suggested that we have an averſation for *Monarchy*, and that we have a mighty fondneſs for a *Democratical Government*. Whether thoſe that firſt reported theſe things concerning us, did *believe* them we cannot tell, but we are ſure that *many* others do. We find that precept of *Machianil* verified in our *Selves*, *Calumniare audacter, ſaltem aliquid adhibebit*. Calumniate boldly, ſomething at leaſt will ſtrike. The moſt pucid *Lies* will find ſome perſons that will *believe* them; and the moſt improbable *faſhods* will receive entertainment with *eaſe* and *credulous* minds.

2. By this means we are made *odious* to ſome perſons, and *ſuſpected* of many others; ſome *hate* us implacably, others grow *jealous*, and entertain hard *thoughts* of us. Were the *characters* they give uſ true and deſerved, we ſhould have no *reaſon* to *complain*, but for as much as we know our ſelves *innocent*, it cannot but be matter of *reſentment* to us, to be ſo villanouſly and *ſpitefully* bely'd and defamed.

3. 'Tis true, there be *very many* that have other *apprehenſions* of us, they are better *acquainted* with our *Judgments* and *Lives*, than to believe ſuch odious *characters* and *deſcriptions*, and we have reaſon to *bleſs* God for it, for if all (I mean all *Church-of-England-men*) believed them, we muſt certainly be *outrage* d in the ſtreets, and *knocked* on the *head* in the *High-ways* and *Villages*; and all that killed us, would think they deſerved a *compensation* for ridding the *Nation* of ſuch *pernicious* vermin.

4. To theſe *infamous lies* and *hellish inſinuations*, we muſt impute the with-drawing of his *Majeſties* favour from us, for although we do believe that he knows little of thoſe *ſeverities* that are uſed and exerciſed toward us, yet we cannot but *think*, that he hath a little loſed the *rein*, by which he reſtrained his *Magiſtrates* and *Officers* from proſecuting and afflicting us. We complain not of our *Sovereign*, we have had much *experience* of his clemency. He muſt ſee by other mens *Eyes*, and hear by other mens *Ears*, and if the ſame *impious ſlanders* be reported to him, that are to many of his *ſubjects* concerning us, (of which there is no doubt) we cannot much *wonder* at our preſent *ſufferings*; for ſuppoſing them true, they were no more than we had *abundantly* deſerved.



## S E C T. XI.

1. **T**H E *Papists* are treated with much more *kindness, civility and mercy* than we can find or receive at the hands of those that prosecute us. 'Tis but seldom, that any of the *Penal Laws* are executed upon them; they live in peace, and disturbance given unto them but rarely. If to avoid the *infamy and scandal of partiality*, some of them be at *sometimes* prosecuted, they usually come off easier than we do. And when they appear before *Magistrates*, they are treated with *language* that is soft and *humane*.

2. Why there is so great and manifest a *difference* betwixt their and our *treatment*, we do not understand.

3. Peradventure they may be persons of better *humour*, and more pleasant *Conversation* than we are. We have not much *personal knowledge* of them, or *acquaintance* with them, and therefore do not know what *Charms and Attractives* may adorn their *Comportment and Behaviour*. Some of them we have *personally* known, and many others by very credible *Fame and Tradition*, and we do not remember, that we have either heard or observed them eminent in any thing, unless it be *Debauchery, Ignorance and Superstition*.

4. We have read and heard something of their *kindness* to *Protestants* in *Foreign Countreys*, as well as in this the *Land of our Nativity*. What they have done in all parts of *Germany, Italy, France, and Spain*, is known to all men that converse in the *Records and Histories* of those *Countreys*. What they did in *England*, in the *Reign of Queen Mary*, and what they did in *Ireland*, in the last Age, is not forgotten. In brief, They murdered them by *Myriads*, and that after the most *cruel and barbarous* manner, that the *wit of man*, inspired by *Hell*, could possibly invent; and if God in *mercy* had not discovered their *Plot and Intention*, we had felt the weight of their *gentle hands* ere this day.

## S E C T. XII.

1. **P**Ersons have been solicited to accuse us of *Plots*, and consequently of *Perjury and Falshood*, to expose us to the *publick vengeance*. This is a late *blessed invention*, and is capable of *improvement*, and may with some *care and good conduct*, become a very *effectual means* to destroy

destroy us. This *contrivance* will deprive us of *Life, Estate and Honour* all together. We shall not only *die*, but we shall *die* with *shame, infamy* and *reproach*, to all Generations. *Vide the Narrative of several of the Discoverers of the late Plot.*

2. Applications have been made to *Persons in Goals* for debt, and sums of *money* more then they are worth, or able to pay. who have been promised *forgiveness* and liberty, if so be they will *accuse* and impeach some *Dissenters* with whom they have formerly had *acquaintance* and conversation. 'Tis known that a *Prison* is no *pleasant* retirement, and that a *great debt* to an insolent Person; is an *uneasie* burthen, and that hopes of liberty and *deliverance*, may be a temptation *probably* successful, and there have been those in the World, that have not been *wanting* to make the Experiment. 'Tis true, we do not remember, to have *knowne*, or *heard* that they have been often successful. *Perjury* and *Murther* are Crimes of that *enormous* nature, that there are *some very bad Men*, that have not *throats large enough* to swallow them. But a little time, and some good *Examples* and encouragements, may take off the *Dread*, and reconcile them to the *Practice* of it. *Vide Idem.*

3. Besides this *mischievous* Engine, there are a *generation* of setters that haunt *publick Houses*, mingle with all *companies*, and talk *Seditiously* with great freedom and boldness of discourse. And why do they do it? 'Tis to tempt others to *speake* something which they may *understand*, and pervert to their *Prejudice* and *Ruin*. And 'twill be hard to *speake* any thing so warily or *innocently*, which they cannot expound into *Treason*, or *Rebellion*; for they have an excellent *faculty* of extracting *Poyson* out of the most innocent *Drugs* and *venom*, from the most harmless *Herbs* and *Flowers*. *Vide Idem.*

4. By this *means* 'tis come to pass, that we can *hardly* permit ourselves the liberty of any *publick Conversation*, though about necessary *business*, or employment. If we chance to meet each other in any *publick Place*, we are obliged to look round, and observe who stands near us, for though we should talk of *nothing* but of the *affaires* of our families, and our callings; we do not know, but it may amount to *Sedition*, or some design against the *State*, if the *Setters* and *Trajaners* should chance to *over heare* us.

5. This is our *Case*, and we think it such as may justify a *complaint* we have not said *all* that we could say, upon this *doleful* Subject, nor have we *given* any thing its just *Aggravations*. We have said nothing but what is *true*, nor indeed is there any need of *Fiction*, to commend us to the *Mercy* of those that have any *Bowels* of *Compassion*.

## CHAP. II.

*The Dissenters Expostulations.*

## SECT. I.

1. **A**ND what now are our Faults and Crimes, or of what number and nature are our Transactions? What is it we have done, to make us become the Objects of all that rage and wrath, that is used, and spent against us? Are we the vilest of Mortals? Are we the most profligate of Mankind? Are we the only part of the Nation, that deserve the publick Vengeance? Why are we hunted and prosecuted like Beasts of Prey, and as if we were a common Nuisance to the Countrey, and Land of our Nativity or Birth.

2. We are treated as the Off-scouring of the Earth, the filth of the World, and Refuse of the People. There is no Contempt, no Scorn, no Reproach, no Penalties, no Violence, no Injury, no Oppression, thought too much to be imposed and laid upon us. But how is it proved that we have deserved it? What evidence is there of those Enormities, that may justify these extraordinary Methods of proceeding against us. The Christians complained of old, that they were punished and condemned for the sake of the Christian name, not for the sake of any Crimes that were proved against them, *Hominis Prelium est*. See *Tertull.* in *Apolget.* and *Athenagoras* in *legat. pro Christianis*.

3. Something of this sort is happened to us in the present Age. To be a Dissenter is Crime enough to expose a man to the rage of Persecutors. *Illud solum expectatur, quod odio publico necessarium est, confessio nominis, non examinatio criminis*. Dissent, to the present Establishment, is æquipollent to all the Publican and Harlot Sins in the World, and we may be guilty of them (we are sorry to speak it) at far easier and cheaper rates. Fornication, Adultery, Scandal, Oppression, Lying, Perjury, Scorn of all Religion, and Blasphemy, are *Peccadillo's* in comparison of Nonconformity. The former are easily expiated, but nothing will allow for the latter but our ruine.

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4. The *Christians* of the first Ages did not deny that they were accused of sundry monstrous Crimes, nor do we deny that we are made sufficiently vile by charge and imputation, but nothing was proved against them. Nor are those infamous Stories reported concerning us, capable of any proof or demonstration, for Lies can never become truth, nor falsehoods obtain the nature of undoubted Verities, and 'tis truth alone that is proveable by argument and convictive evidence. 'Tis true we do confess, that Men of *Parts* and *Wit* will very finely dress a Falshood, and persons of an *impudent Front* and *prostituted Conscience* will affirm the most prodigious Lies and Slanders; but when all is done, the nature of things and Facts is the same, and utterly invariable.

## S E C T. 2.

1. Is it a Sin of so monstrous a nature, that nothing can expiate it but our destruction to refuse to subscribe Propositions of doubtful and uncertain nature? If they be doubtful, why are we obliged to assert their truth? If they be uncertain, why must we aver them past all Controversy and Dispute? If they be neither doubtful, nor uncertain, why is it that *Christians* are not agreed concerning them? Why is the learned World so much divided about them? Would they everlastingly contend, about things evident and apparent? Would they perpetuate a Controversy about things as plain as the Light, and obvious as the mid-day Sun?

2. Is it a Crime that deserves all this Cruelty, and all those Barbarities that are executed upon us, that we refuse our Subscription to things of impertinent and unnecessary nature? Are all those Propositions and other things to which our Subscription and Consent, and many others, is required necessary, and of the essence of the Religion of *Christ Jesus*? May not a man be a good Christian, though he should not understand, nor believe any thing of them? If they be necessary, why are they not comprehended in the *Baptismal Covenant*, or in the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and the ten Commandments? These were anciently thought to contain all the necessary Doctrines of Christian Faith and Practice, and we are of Opinion they do so still. The essential and necessary parts of Religion are invariable, they are the same now that they were in the days of the *Apostles* and ancient Churches.

3. Is it so heinous a Transgression to refuse the practice of things of no use, and to no edification, that no compensation can be made for it, but what will undo us? We do not know of what use those Cere-

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monies are, that have been, and still are in use in this *Church*, nor who is edified by them. We are sure those that are the greatest *Zealots* for them, do not appear to be much edified by the *Appointments* and *Institutions* of God, and 'twere strange if they should be advantaged by those of Man, who are little or nothing believed by those of God. And if those that love and admire them, make no *profitable* use of them, What may be hoped from those that love them not?

4. Are not the *Laws* of God sufficient for our *Observation*? And may not *Christians* go safe to Heaven, under the direction, and in the *Obedience* of his *Commandments*? Are God's *Laws* sufficient for their end, or are they not? If they be sufficient, What need is there of any additions to them? If they be not sufficient, Why do we assert and prove it against the *Papists*?

5. Since *Christ Jesus* hath freed us from the *Yoke*, that God himself had imposed upon the *Jewish Church*, we know no *Obligation* lying upon us, to receive a *Yoke* that shall be imposed upon us by Man. We refuse *Obedience* to none of the *Laws* of God, nor to no *Laws* of Men, that are necessary for the observance of the *Divine Appointments* and *Institutions*, such as are the determination of time and place, and sundry others, but these *Laws* that are the effects of *pure will*, and of no use nor profit, but occasions of *Strife* and *Contention*, we do profess to all the *World*, we know not the *Obligation* of them.

6. Must we be *Ruined*, *Banished*, or *Hanged*, for no other reason, but because we are loath to be damned? *St. Paul* saith, that *Whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin*, and he that doubteth is damned if he eat. We have considered the *impositions* that are laid upon our *Judgments* and *Practices*, we have spent much time in the *meditation* of them, and would very willingly have submitted to them, if we could have done it with a satisfied and assured *Mind*. But upon the most *serious deliberation* which we have made upon them, we find an *everlasting* renitency of *Judgment* and *Conscience* against them. This is our *Case*, and this is our *Fault*, and must we abjure the *Land*, or swing in a *Rope* at home, for the sake of it? This in our *Apprehension* is somewhat severe, but the choice is not difficult, we had far rather be *Banished* our *Country* then that out of *Heaven*, 'tis more eligible to climb a *Gallows*, or ascend a *Gibbet*, then descend the nethermost *Hell*. But whether it be justifiable to impose such a choice upon us; is worthy the consideration of those that are concerned therein.

destroy us. This *contrivance* will deprive us of *Life, Estate and Honour* all together. We shall not only *die*, but we shall *die* with *shame, infamy* and *reproach*, to all Generations. *Vide the Narrative of several of the Discoverers of the late Plot.*

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## CHAP. II.

*The Dissenters Expostulations.*

## SECT. I.

1. **A**ND what now are our Faults and Crimes, or of what number and nature are our Transactions? What is it we have done, to make us become the Objects of all that rage and wrath, that is used, and spent against us? Are we the vilest of Mortals? Are we the most profligate of Mankind? Are we the only part of the Nation, that deserve the publick Vengeance? Why are we hunted and prosecuted like Beasts of Prey, and as if we were a common Nuisance to the Countrey, and Land of our Nativity or Birth.

2. We are treated as the Off-scouring of the Earth, the filth of the World, and Refuse of the People. There is no Contempt, no Scorn, no Reproach, no Penalties, no Violence, no Injury, no Oppression, thought too much to be imposed and laid upon us. But how is it proved that we have deserved it? What evidence is there of those Enormities, that may justify these extraordinary Methods of proceeding against us. The Christians complained of old, that they were punished and condemned for the sake of the Christian name, not for the sake of any Crimes that were proved against them, *Hominis Prelum est. See Tertull. in Apolget. and Athenagoras in legat. pro Christianis.*

3. Something of this sort is happened to us in the present Age. To be a Dissenter is Crime enough to expose a man to the rage of Persecutors. *Illud solum expectatur, quod odio publico necessarium est, confessio nominis, non examinatio criminis.* Dissent, to the present Establishment, is æquipollent to all the Publican and Harlot Sins in the World, and we may be guilty of them (we are sorry to speak it) at far easier and cheaper rates. Fornication, Adultery, Scandal, Oppression, Lying, Perjury, Scorn of all Religion, and Blasphemy, are Peccadillo's in comparison of Nonconformity. The former are easily expiated, but nothing will allow for the latter but our ruine.

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destroy us. This *contrivance* will deprive us of *Life, Estate and Honour* all together. We shall not only *die*, but we shall *die with shame, infamy and reproach*, to all Generations. *Vide the Narrative of several of the Discoverers of the late Plot.*

2. Applications have been made to *Persons in Goals* for debt, and sums of *money* more then they are worth, or able to pay. who have been promised *forgiveness* and liberty, if so be they will *accuse* and impeach some *Dissenters* with whom they have formerly had *acquaintance* and conversation. 'Tis known that a *Prison* is no *pleasant* retirement, and that a *great debt* to an insolent Person; is an *unease* burthen, and that hopes of liberty and *deliverance*, may be a temptation *probably* successful, and there have been those in the World, that have not been *wanting* to make the Experiment. 'Tis true, we do not remember, to have *knowne*, or *heard* that they have been often successful. *Perjury* and *Murther* are Crimes of that *enormous* nature, that there are *some very bad Men*, that have not *throats large enough* to swallow them. But a little time, and some good *Examples* and encouragements, may take off the *Dread*, and reconcile them to the *Practice* of it. *Vide Idem.*

3. Besides this *mischievous Engine*, there are a *generation* of setters that haunt *publick Houses*, mingle with all *companies*, and talk *Seditiously* with great freedom and boldness of discourse. And why do they do it? 'Tis to tempt others to *speake* something which they may *understand*, and pervert to their *Prejudice* and *Ruin*. And 'twill be hard to *speake* any thing so warily or *innocently*, which they cannot expound into *Treason*, or *Rebellion*; for they have an excellent *faculty* of extracting *Poyson* out of the most innocent *Drugs* and *venom*, from the most harmless *Herbs* and *Flowers*. *Vide Idem.*

4. By this means 'tis come to pass, that we can hardly permit ourselves the liberty of any *publick Conversation*, though about necessary *business*, or employment. If we chance to meet each other in any *publick Place*, we are obliged to look round, and observe who stands near us, for though we should talk of *nothing* but of the *affaires* of our families, and our callings; we do not know, but it may amount to *Sedition*, or some design against the *State*, if the *Setters* and *Trajanmen* should chance to *over heare* us.

5. This is our *Case*, and we think it such as may justify a *complaint*. we have not said all that we could say, upon this *doleful Subject*, nor have we given any thing its just *Aggravations*. We have said nothing but what is *true*, nor indeed is there any need of *Fiction*, to commend us to the *Mercy* of those that have any *Bowels* of *Compassion*.



## CHAP. II.

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4. The *Christians* of the first Ages did not deny that they were accused of sundry *monstrous* Crimes, nor do we deny that we are made sufficiently vile by charge and imputation, but nothing was proved against them. Nor are those *infamous* Stories reported concerning us, capable of any proof or demonstration, for Lies can never become truth, nor falsehoods obtain the nature of undoubted Verities, and 'tis truth alone that is proveable by argument and convictive evidence. 'Tis true we do confess, that Men of *Parts* and *Wit* will very finely dress a Falsehood, and persons of an *impudent Front* and *prostituted Conscience* will affirm the most *prodigious* Lies and Slanders; but when all is done, the nature of things and Facts is the same, and utterly invariable.

## S E C T. 2.

1. Is it a Sin of so monstrous a nature, that nothing can expiate it but our destruction to refuse to subscribe Propositions of doubtful and uncertain nature? If they be doubtful, why are we obliged to assert their truth? If they be uncertain, why must we aver them past all Controversy and Dispute? If they be neither doubtful, nor uncertain, why is it that *Christians* are not agreed concerning them? Why is the learned World so much divided about them? Would they everlastingly contend, about things evident and apparent? Would they perpetuate a Controversy about things as plain as the Light, and obvious as the mid-day Sun?

2. Is it a Crime that deserves all this Cruelty, and all those Barbarities that are executed upon us, that we refuse our Subscription to things of impertinent and unnecessary nature? Are all those Propositions and other things to which our Subscription and Consent, and many others, is required necessary, and of the essence of the Religion of *Christ Jesus*? May not a man be a good Christian, though he should not understand, nor believe any thing of them? If they be necessary, why are they not comprehended in the *Baptismal Covenant*, or in the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and the ten Commandments? These were anciently thought to contain all the necessary Doctrines of Christian Faith and Practice, and we are of Opinion they do so still. The *essential* and necessary parts of Religion are invariable, they are the same now that they were in the days of the *Apostles* and antient Churches.

3. Is it so heinous a Transgression to refuse the practice of things of no use, and to no edification, that no compensation can be made for it, but what will undo us? We do not know of what use those Ceremonies

monies are, that have been, and still are in use in this Church, nor who is edified by them. We are sure those that are the greatest Zealots for them, do not appear to be much edified by the Appointments and Institutions of God, and 'twere strange if they should be advantaged by those of Man, who are little or nothing believed by those of God. And if those that love and admire them, make no *profitable* use of them, What may be hoped from those that love them not?

4. Are not the Laws of God sufficient for our Observation? And may not Christians go safe to Heaven, under the direction, and in the Obedience of his Commandments? Are God's Laws sufficient for their end, or are they not? If they be sufficient, What need is there of any additions to them? If they be not sufficient, Why do we assert and prove it against the *Papists*?

5. Since *Christ Jesus* hath freed us from the *Yoke*, that God himself had imposed upon the *Jewish* Church, we know no Obligation lying upon us, to receive a *Yoke* that shall be imposed upon us by Man. We refuse Obedience to none of the Laws of God, nor to no Laws of Men, that are necessary for the observance of the Divine Appointments and Institutions, such as are the determination of time and place, and sundry others, but these Laws that are the effects of *pure will*, and of no use nor profit, but occasions of Strife and Contention, we do profess to all the World, we know not the Obligation of them.

6. Must we be Ruined, Banished, or Hanged, for no other reason, but because we are loath to be damned? St. Paul saith, that *Whatsoever is not of Faith is Sin, and he that doubteth is damned if he eat*. We have considered the *impositions* that are laid upon our Judgments and Practices, we have spent much time in the *meditation* of them, and would very willingly have submitted to them, if we could have done it with a satisfied and assured Mind. But upon the most *serious deliberation* which we have made upon them, we find an *everlasting* renitency of Judgment and Conscience against them. This is our Case, and this is our Fault, and must we abjure the Land, or swing in a Rope at home, for the sake of it? This in our *Apprehension* is somewhat severe, but the choice is not difficult, we had far rather be Banished our Country then that out of Heaven, 'tis more eligible to climb a Gallows, or ascend a Gibbet, then descend the nethermost Hell. But whether it be justifiable to impose such a choice upon us; is worthy the consideration of those that are concerned therein.

## SECT. 3.

1. Is it a greater Sin to Worship God by other rules, then those prescribed by our Laws, then it is to live as without *God in the World*, and never perform *any publick Worship* to him at all? How many thousands are there in the Towns, Cities, and Villages, of this Nation, that never attend the house of God, that never *Sanctifie his Sabbaths*, or *Venerate his Sanctuaries*? And what are the Punishments that they do *sustain* thereby? Are they *prosecuted at Law*? Are their Goods seized? Their Persons Imprisoned, and their Families beggered in revenge thereof?

2. We hear of no Complaints or Lamentations, made by these kind of People, which surely they would do, if they had any occasion or foundation for them. They are not Men of such tame and passive Spirits, as to endure scourging without any Groans or Exclamations; for though they regard not God nor his Worship, they love their *Liberty* and their *Estates*, and would not part with them without loud significations of their Reluctancy against it. Since they cry not out of Violence and Oppression, we may be sure they are at rest.

3. May Men be *Atheists*, *Infidels*, or *Heathens*, with Impunity? May they despise God and all the Laws and Methods of his Worship with all the security they can desire or wish? And must the *Dissenters* be worried like *Bears*, and torn with *Dogs* because they fear God and call upon his name? 'Tis true, they do not do it altogether according to the direction of our Laws. But do they not do it according to the Laws of God? Did *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* use any more Ceremony or Liturgy in Preaching, Praying, and Administring the Sacrament then they do? And why may not that suffice? Is it a pardonable Crime to be a *Heathen*, and is it a fault worthy of the severest Punishment to Worship God and his Christ after the manner and example of the Apostles? Some Men seem to be of that Opinion, but we think it were not amiss to renounce it, for sure we are, that the Devil is the Author of it.

4. We are not ignorant of what is said, by the Masters and Fautors of Impositions, on the behalf, and for the defence of them. 'Tis said, that without them no Peace nor Order can ever be preserved in the Church of God. But we are of another mind. In our Judgment, nothing ought to be imposed, but a few, plain, necessary things, and those are enough for the *maintenance* of Peace, and that to impose a multitude of things, *needless*, *obscure*, *controverted*, and *uncertain* is the high and

and certain way to endless *Factions* and *Divisions*, and that as much Peace as the Church of God is capable of in this imperfect State, may be more safely and advantageously obtained without them. But for this we must again refer the Reader to the Book called the *Samaritan*.

## S E C T. 4.

1. Have we formed any *Conspiracy* against the Person and Life of our *Sovereign*? Have we held any *Cabals* or *Consultations* for the promoting of his Murther? Have any Sums of Money been advanced to *encourage*, and *reward* so horrid an *undertaking*? Who were the *Collectors*? Who the *Receivers*? And where is the *Treasury* in which it was lodged, or laid.

2. Have we designed the *change* or *alteration* of the *Government*? Have we purposed to *overthrow* the Established Monarchy, and to introduce a *Democracy* in the room of it? Where is the Model of it? Who was the Author? and where was it found? It must be supposed, that if we have intended to subvert the old *Fabrick* we have a new one erect in the stead of it? But what is it, and after what exemplar was it drawn?

3. Supposing we had designed such a mutation, by what *means* or *endeavors* could we hope to accomplish it? Would a *new Model* overthrow our old *Government*, merely by being *invented* by some *Fanciful Man*? Where are those Sons of *Mars* and *Apollo*? Those Persons of Wisdom and Valour that must have executed these *Chymical Projects*? Could we think to effect them without Men, and Arms, and all the *Furniture* and *Provisions* for War?

4. Who, and where are the Men that must have fought under our *Banners*, and have marched at the *sound* of our Trumpets, and noise of our Drums? Who Disciplined, or taught them the Mystery of War? Where were they Mustered, was it above or beneath the Earth? Was it among the Clouds of *Heaven*, or in the subterraneous Vaults of *Hell*? Surely it must be in one of them, if any where, for there was never any such on *Earth*: And for ought that we know, *imaginary Musters*, and *Armies*, may be accommodate enough, to *designs* in *Romance*, and to all others, we are perfect *Strangers*, and know not a *ittle* concerning them.

5. As we think it impossible to have managed a Design against the Government with *Secrecy*, had we been so wicked to have undertaken it; so we do utterly disavow any such thing: We have no Purposes or Intentions, but only to live peaceably and quietly under His *Majesties* Government and Protection. We do confess, we would be glad to enjoy

enjoy the *Liberty of our Consciences*, and be freed from the perpetual Danger of the *Penal Laws*: If this be a Fault, 'tis one that we cannot tell how to help: Our Judgments and Consciences are not under the Empire of our Wills. We cannot alter them, neither at our own, nor other *mens Lists*. Sence is of our Essence and Constitution: We may bear the Penalties of the *Statutes*, but we cannot forbear to feel them, nor to desire to be discharged of the burthen and danger of them.

6. We will not conceal that we have heard of a *Great Peer*, that was impeached for *traiterous* Deligns against the *Government* and State; but we must, and do declare to all the World, before that *God* that is the *Judge* of it, that if he had any such *Intention*, we neither had Knowledge of it, nor any Confederation with him therein; and some men think 'tis impossible we should: For *non entis nulla sunt affectiones*, that which was not, could not be known.

## SECT. 5.

1. Have we ever refused to contribute to the *maintenance* of the Government with our Lives and Fortunes? Have not our *Purses* been as open, and our *Hands* as ready to defend his *Majesties* Honor and Greatness as any other of his Subjects? Did we ever betray any Trust that was committed to us? Have we turned our Backs in the day of Bartel? Have we not been as *prodigal* of our Blood, and given as good Proofs of our *Courage* and Valour as any others that have been engaged with us in the same hazards and dangers? When, and where did we do any thing unworthy of *English* men, or good Subjects? Where are our Accusers? let them stand forth and convince us (if they are able) of any *Disloyalty*, or neglect of Duty, towards the Support of the just Grandeur of our Prince.

2. Let them not object to us the *Rebellion* and *Miscarriages* of the last Age: We neither promoted nor approved them. Many of us were not then borne; others were *children*; others opposed what was then done; and some that were too much guilty in the *Tragedies* of those times, have since *repented it in Dust and Ashes*. As we do not justify, so we will not account for other mens Sins. We only plead our *own Cause*, and assert our own Integrity and Uprightness. We hope we shall not be punished for the *Iniquities of our Fathers*, nor reckoned Enemies to the State, because *some of them* were so.

3. If we must be reputed ill Subjects, because some men will suspect us, and esteemed *Traytors*, because *poisonous Tongues* will calumniate and *reproach* us, our Case is pityable; but without *Remedy*. For there is no defence against *Slander*, Mens Lusts, and spiteful passions are not under our *Government* or *Restraint*; what they suggest will be spoken, though never so false and infamous, and we cannot prevent it. The most unblemished *Loyalty* is no Protection against a *malicious malignant Mind*; a Tongue set on *Fire of Hell*, will blast the *fairest* and most unspotted *Reputation*.

4. We have a *Province* that is not easily managed to the *satisfaction* of these Revilers: If we refuse the *Oaths*, *Subscriptions* and *Declarations* that are required of us as *Testimonies* and *Securities* of our Fidelity, we are reported and said to reject them, because they are inconsistent with our Purposes and Principles of Rebellion. If we accept and submit to them in the same Sence that all sober and considering Church of *England* men do, 'tis said that we do it with design to get *Officers* and *Preferrments* in Church and State, that we may be the more capable of subverting and *destroying* both one and the other. This is the *Language* of multitudes of Books and Pamphlets which the Press voids every day.

5. What shall we do to please these Men? We are willing to give them all *reasonable* Content; but if neither *assent* nor *dissent* to their *Impositions*; if neither *obedience*, nor *disobedience* to their *Injunctions*, will humor or please them, we must desire them to inform us what will: For we are not very well able to inform our selves.

6. And yet after some Consideration, we think we may have found what may please and put them in good *humour*: Would we *hang, drown*, or *cut* our own *Throats*, and leave them Heirs to our Estates and Fortunes, 'tis not improbable but that it might be an *Adventure* much to their Acceptation: But if nothing else will commend us to their Favor, we must beg their Pardon, we shall not purchase it at their Price. We have no mind to be *damned*, to give them *Satisfaction*: If they will buy it at that Rate, we must bear it; but they must excuse us, we will have no hand or part with them therein: If we must die to gratifie them, they must be our *Executioners*.

## SECT. 6.

1. But what indeed is the Ground of Provocation? Are we useless, unprofitable, or burthen some *Members* of the Nation? Do we live without Labour, or do we eat of the *Sweat* of other mens Brows? Are we not



not equally industrious with any other sort of men? Do we not contribute to the *enriching* of our *Country* as much as other of his *Majesties* Subjects? We bear our part in that *Trade*, and toil in those Arts and Mysteries, by which Supplies are made to the *Pleasures*, *Necessities*, and *Magnificence* of all Orders and Degrees of men.

2. Do not we assist to the Advancement of the Customs and Revenues of the Crown? All men that know any thing of those matters, do acknowledge, that of *late years* they have received very great *Emoluments*, and are swollen beyond the *proportion* of former Ages; and have we had no *part*, nor share therein? Do not we partake in that Trade and Merchandise by which they are encreased and advanced?

3. No man of *Sence* can deny us a part in those Advantages, that have been made to the *Revenue*, and riches of our *Sovereign*. We have surely done something, towards the Augmentation of them, and those that deny it are such, as have neither *Brains*, nor *Front*. They are both ignorant, and themselves *Impostors*. And 'tis our Opinion, that those that counsel and advise our Ruine, will not be able to *countervail the King's Damage*.

4. We mention not these things out of *Vanity* or *Ostentation*; but that it may appear, that we are not utterly *useless* and of no signification in the world. Our Enemies report us not only *unprofitable*, but noxious and hurtful to the *Commonwealth*. The *Paragraphs* of this Section are a sufficient *Confutation* of the former of these *Fables*, and the whole Body of this *Discourse* will confute the latter to all impartial and *unprejudiced* Men.

## SECT 7.

1. Are we only a *handful* of Men that may all safely be destroyed? Will the Nation be of *equal* Strength when we are sacrificed to the Rage and Lust of those that *bate* us? Hath his Majesty too many Subjects; and will he be as great and *puissant* without, as with the Assistance of our *Numbers*? What our Numbers are, we do not *pretend* to know; but some there are scattered too, and few in most of the Towns, Cities, and Villages of the Nation, and we think more, then can with security be ruined and destroyed.

2. 'Tis not impossible, but that His Majesty may have use for all his Subjects, were they much more *numerous* then they are. He is *Neighbour* to an *Aspiring Prince*, that may, in due time, give him *disturbance*, and

if



if some *check* be not put to the *Progress* of his *Arms*, we are afraid that the *united* force of all his *People*, may not be sufficient to guard his *Throne*.

3. We do not pretend any *Correspondence* with the *ministers* of the *French King*, or to have any Knowledge of his *Councils*. We know not where he will employ his *Troops*; nor which way he will direct his *Legions*; but we cannot be ignorant that he is an *ambitious Prince*, and covetous of enlarging his *Empire* and *Dominion*; and if the *Grand Seigneur* continue his Attempts upon *Hungary*, he may do what he lists: All the Force the *Emperour* can make, will be little enough to engage the *Turks*, and restrain the Deluge that is coming upon him by his *Myriads*.

4. The *Achievements* of the *French King* in *Holland* some few years since are in the *Memory* of all considering Men. In the space of one months time, he swallowed up almost five of the seven *Provinces*; and had not the *Emperor*, and some of the *Princes* of *Germany* come in to their Assistance, he had devoured the other two, for ought that we can understand; and what he did then, he may do again. The *Dane*, and *Electors* of *Brandenburgh* are Confederates with him: The *Swede* is a great way from them, and will not be able to help or assist them. The *Bishop* of *Munster*, the *Electors* of *Collen*, the *Dukes* of *Lunenburgh* and *Hanover*, will not dare (if they should be willing) to give them any Assistance, lest the *French King* turn his Force upon them, and swallow them at a Morsel.

5. If his *Christian Majesty* conquer the *Dutch* (which we shall wonder if he does not do very speedily, and *Flanders* into the Bargain) all the Subjects of our *English Monarch* will not be sufficient to defend him. His own *Fleets* in *Conjunction* with those of *Holland*, will make him absolute *Master* at Sea; and we shall have no Trade, but by his License and *Permission*: And if he please to deny it us, we must be content without it: For to speak of forcing it by our *Naval Power*, is to disparage our *Understandings*, and to expose our selves to the scorn of all considering Men.

6. The *Dutch* themselves are almost our *Rivals* in *Naval Prowess* and *Valour*, and when they shall be assisted by the *Purse* and *Fleet* of *Lewis* the Fourteenth, they will be our *Superiors*, and run us down with their *Numbers*: But the Truth is, there will be very little Use or Occasion for any *Battels* or *Conflicts*. If two or three *Squadrons* of light Vessels be kept at Sea, they will be sufficient to rob us, or put us to so great Expence for *Convoys* as shall certainly undo us.

7. Besides all this, 'tis not to be *doubted* but that the *French King*, either by his *Confederacies*, or his *Arms* may command the *Zound*, through which comes almost all our *Cordage*, *Pitch*, *Tarr*, and other *Provisions* for *Shipping*; and if he shall deny us the *Liberty* of fetching them from thence, our *Trade* will be at an end; our *Ships* must be laid up in the *Docks*, and he may invade us whensoever he *pleases*; and 'twill be well if all the *People* in the *Land* be enough to secure the *Royal Diadem* on the Head of our King: Or if he shall not think fit to hazard an *Invasion*, being an *Island*, he may do what will amount to a *Siege*: He may distress us by his *Fleets*; and after he hath *impoverished*, *beggered*, and *starved* us, he will force us to a *Composition* in despite of our *Teeth*; which we may be sure will be sufficiently to the *Dishonor* and *Prejudice* of Prince and People.

8. These things are not the *fond Imaginations* of fanciful and *Hypochondriack* Men; but the sober *Thoughts* of such as can think and consider. We do not say, that things will prove according to these *Apprehensions*; 'tis sufficient that they are *probable*, and may be so. There is nothing *certain* in *Humane Affairs*: The greatest *Enterprizes* in the *World* are *undertaken* upon *probable Reasons* and *Arguments*; and 'tis the *Office* of *Prudence* and *Policy* to make *Provisions* against *probable Dangers*.

## SECT. 7.

And what will you do with your *Estates* when we are ruined and undone? Have you too many *Tenants* to occupy and employ your *Lands*? Where are those *Supernumeraries*? How may we find their *Residence* and *Habitations*? If they be so *numerous*, how comes it to pass that so many *Estates* lie almost *waste*, and so many *Houses* without any *Inhabitants*? How is it that *Farms* go a begging, and that those that own them are *glad* to be rid of them almost upon any *Terms* in the *World*?

2. Are not the *Rents* and *Values* of your *Lands* very much *diminished* and *abated*? Are they not sunk twenty, thirty, and forty in the *Hundred*; and can you tell *when* and *where* they will stand? Is our *Poverty* and *Ruine* a likely way of advancing them to their former *Standard*? We know not how you take your *measures*, nor by what *Rules* you make your *Computations*; but we are of the mind, that our *Diminution* will not be your *Encrease*; and that if we be brought to the *Dung-hill*, your *Estates* and *Honours* will receive no *Advancement* thereby.

3. If the Value of your *Lands* decay, how will you support your usual State and Grandeur? How will you *educate*, provide for, *dispose* of your Children, according to their *Birth* and *Spirit*? Have you not found it a work of some Care and *Providence* even then, when your Estates were at the highest rate and value? If it were difficult then, will it not be now *impossible*? Or can you do that with two thousand pounds per annum, that you could not formerly do with *three*: will nine pence go farther than a Noble?

4. Are you content to be poor, so we be ruin'd, and to abate of your greatness, so we may be laid on the *Dunghil*? Can you deny your selves some *Pleasures* and *Satisfactions*, provided we may be miserable and afflicted? Can you endure some *abusement* if we be trod upon as the *Mire* in the *Streets*? This is a piece of Self-Denial, which we did not expect, and we doubt whether you would do so much for the *Sake* of *God*, and all the *Laws* of his *Gospel*.

## SECT. 8.

1. In the next place, What will you do with us our selves when we are beggered, ruined, and undone? We have so much Charity as to hope, you intend not to observe any of the *Roman* Methods in disposing of us. Though those that Persecute us be cruel enough, and we find it by sensible and woful experience, yet we cannot think that they intend to cut our *Throats*, or by short and *summary Proceedings* send us to our Graves. We must confess, we have known some that have said, that they could very willingly sheath their Swords in our *Bowels*, and bath their hands in our *Blood*: But we hope there are not many of this *Savage* and *Brutish* humour.

2. Most *Towns* complain already of the *number* and *burthen* of their *Poor*, and think the charge *insupportable*, How then will it be borne, when we are added to their *number*? Must we Dye, and starve of *Hunger* and *Cold*? Must we *faint* and *swoon* in the *High-ways* and *Streets*, and *Villages*? These are no *Stories* in *Arras*, these are no *Fictions* or *Imageries* of *Fancy*. If the *Laws* be prosecuted to the utmost, hither it will come at last.

3. But perhaps we may have reckoned without our *Host*, and made those *Suppositions* that will not be granted us. It may be we may not be permitted either to *live* or *starve* at home. What then shall be done with us? Shall we be sold for *Slaves*, and sent to toil with *Negroes* in the *Western Islands*? Are we a sort of *Vermin* fit only for their *Employment*

and Conversation? We have read, we do confess, of Persons much better then our selves, that have been condemned to the Mines, and others to the Gallies; but those that passed those Sentences and Judgments upon them, were either Heathens, Infidels, or Papists. And will English Men and Protestants, write after such Coppies, and imitate such Examples?

4. And could your Eyes behold, or your Hearts endure so dismal an undertaking? Could you see us shipped, and sent by thousands to the American-Indies? Have you no Bowels, no Pity, nor no Compassions, for those that are of your own nature, and of the same Religion? Or could you cohibit, repress, or restrain them in so lamentable a case? What! Have you Hearts of Marble, and Entrails of Brass? Have you put off Man, and put on Beast? Have you only the Shape and Figure of Men, with the nature of Tygers, Bears, and Lyons.

## SECT. 9.

1. After this, What account then will you be able to give to God, of the Severities that you exercise towards us? We hope you believe a Supreme Being, and a Day of Judgment, and that all Men must appear there, and give account of the deeds done in the Body? And do you not know that Christ Jesus is to be your Judge, and that he esteems all the Injuries and Wrongs that are done unto his Servants and Disciples, as done unto himself? And are you sure that those that you Persecute are none of them? Are you sure they are not Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bone? Do you not know that God is a Consuming Fire, and that 'tis a fearful thing to fall into his hand? These are serious Questions, and should be seriously considered, and not scorned and turned into Ridicule; for if these Men, that you thus Prosecute with so much Rage and Wrath, should prove the Servants of the Living God, (as we do not doubt but that they will) *Certamente no queriamos estar so Pellejo vuestro*, we should be very loath to be under your Skin, as the Spanish Proverb expresses it.

2. We are not ignorant of what is pleaded in your defence, and for your justification. 'Tis said, that we are Hereticks, Schismaticks, Men of Sedition, Subverters of all Peace and Order, and many other things of like importance are charged upon us. And were not Christ and his Apostles accused of the same Crimes? Was not Christ said to subvert the Mosaical Institution, which he denied, by saying, he came not to destroy the Law but to fulfil it? Was not Paul said to be a Turbulent Fellow, and

and a mover of *Sedition*? Were not he and others of the Apostles and Preachers of the Gospel, said to have turned the *World upside down*? Were not all *Christians* accounted *Sectaries*, and *Schismaticks*, by the Scribes and Pharisees, and other of the People of the *Jews*? This *Sect*, say they, is every where spoken against.

3. Were they not very confident of the truth of their *Opinions* and *Apprehensions*? Did they not think verily that *Christ Jesus* was a Malefactor and ought to dye? Would they have cryed out his *Blood be upon us, and upon our Children*, if they had believed him innocent? Were not those Persons perswaded, that they had right on their side, which Gnashed their Teeth, stopped their Ears, ran upon *St. Stephen*, dragged him out of the City, and stoned him with stones till he dyed? Were not the *Heathens* pretty well assured, in their own Conceits, that they did very commendably and well, when they outraged the *Christians*, and cryed out *ἀπε τῶν ἀσέβων, Take away the Ungodly*? Vid. *Euseb. lib. 4. Cap. 14.*

4. And is it not certain that they were deceived and mistaken? Was it not the Son of God, that the *Jews* persecuted, and murdered, as an Enemy to *Moses*, and a Confederat of *Bee'zebub*? Were they not the Apostles of *Christ*, and the Preachers of Peace, which they prosecuted as Disturbers of the Order and Government of the *World*? Were not the *Primitive Christians*, which the *Heathen* Prosecuted as *Atheists*, Impious, and Ungodly, Persons of pure and unblameable Conversations, and most Religious Worshipers of the true and onely God?

5. And is it not possible, that you may be deceived in your Judgments and Conceptions, concerning us? Are you not Men of like Passions and Prejudices, with those that have preceded you in past Generations? May you not have believed many Lies and slanderous Reports against us? And is not your Enmity and Aversation towards us, raised upon impudent Falshoods, and frontless Fables? Do you know those things to be true for the sake whereof you hate us?

6. 'Tis true you do know, that we do *Worship* God in a manner something different from that prescribed by our Laws, and peradventure this may be all the evil that you know concerning us: 'Twas said of old, *Bonus vir Caius Seius, sed malus tantum quod Christianus. Caius Seius* is a good Man, but he is naught, only because he is a Christian. *Tertull. in Apol.* And we think we might pass for honest men, were it not for our non-conformity. And is that a Crime that will justify all this Severity, and authorize all this Rage that is used and spent against us? we cannot tell what it may do at man's Tribunal, we do very much believe, it will not do at that of God.

SECT,

## S E C T. 10.

But alas, to come up closer, what hurt do the Dissenters do indeed to the Church of England? May it not subsist and continue in its *Splendor*, tho' a few of them were permitted to serve God after their *own manner*, in their own *Congregations*? Is it any hurt to a *Great Lord*, that there are some *poor Cottages* in the Neighbourhood of his *Palace*? Must his Stately Seat *drop to the Ground*, if they be suffered to stand? will the *Foundations* of that vast *Fabrick* sink, and the *Walls* and *Roof* fall to the Earth, if these remain in the *Uicinage* thereof? We cannot imagine how a few sorry *Conventicles* can do any Injury to the *magnificence* of our *English Church*.

2. What *Injury* did the *French Church* suffer, by permitting a few *Dissenting Protestants* the Liberty of their own *Worship* and *Congregations*? we think that *Church* as *illustrious* when it permitted them their *Liberty*, as now, when it is using all *Arts* and *Methods* to deprive them of it. Besides, the Liberty granted to the *Protestants*, gave it the Reputation of some *Kindness* and *Humanity*: whereas their present *Proceedings* blast its *Reputation*, and expose it as *cruel*, *barbarous*, and *perfidious*, to all considering and *impartial* men.

3. And we are of the mind, that *Indulgence* to some few *Dissenting Churches*, would be no *diminution* to the *Glory* of the *Church of England*. Yea, we do believe, that it would make it more *illustrious*, and give it a fairer *Reputation* than the present *Persecutions* will ever do. *Persecution* sooner or later turns to the *Reproach* and *Infamy* of those that are the *Authors* and *Promoters* of it. Whatever it may be in the *Opinion* of some Men in the present Age, we make no doubt but it will be *odious* in the next. Those that have been conversant in *History*, cannot but observe, that *Persecution* hath always left a *Spot* and a *Stain* upon those that have been *Agents* therein; and such a one as no *Soap*, or *Niter* will ever wash out, or cleanse. *Bonner* and *Gardner* will be *infamous* to all Generations.

4. We *Love*, and wish so well to the *Church of England*, that we should be sorry that the *Practices* of this Age should make it a *Reproach* in the next. *Persecution* and *Cruelty* are so peculiar to that *Apostate Roman Synagogue*, that we should be very loth, that any other *Christian Church* should partake with them therein; and much more that of *England*: For whatever Church doth participate with them in their *Cruelties*, will bear a part with them in the *Infamy* and *Scandal* thereof. Like  
*Actions*

*Actions will have like Appellations.* Those that will *prosecute* good men for *serving God*, will be reputed *Persecutors*, whatever they may say and pretend for their Defence and Justification.

## SECT. II.

Is it the matter of our Doctrine you take Offence at? Do our Ministers commend false Doctrine to those that hear them? Do they preach pernicious Errors? Is there any thing in their *Sermons* and *Discourses* that is of dangerous or mischievous Nature? They are men as well as others; and we do not doubt but they are *lyable to Errors* and *Mistakes*, as well as others of *Humane Race*. But are their *Errors* of more fatal *Consequence* and dangerous *Quality* than those that are to be found among the *regular* and *conformable* Clergy? If they be so, why is it not proved against them; why are they not *convinced* thereof to their *Reproach* and *Shame*?

2. Have they indeed *preached Sedition*, or suggested such things as might disturb the *publick Peace*? Have they *spoke evil of Dignities*, or endeavoured to mutiny the People against them? Have they *persuaded* them to cast off the *Yoke*, and assert their own *Freedom*, to the Overthrow of all good *Government* and *Order*, and to the introducing of *Anarchy*, and utter Confusion? On the contrary, is there any Book written for *Loyalty*, with more Conviction, Weight of Argument, Soberness of Spirit, and Perspicacity of Notion (though intricate sometimes in the Style) than that Book so honestly commended by the Bishop of Cork, Intituled, *A peaceable Resolution of Conscience, touching our present Impositions*: And is not the Author of that Book a *Nonconformist*? we speak not of what was done some years ago; but vindicate our own *Innocency*: we defend not the Faults of our *Progenitors*; nor can we cure the *Miscarriages* of the *Past-age*.

3. Have any of our serious Ministers published Tenents inconsistent with the Articles of our common Creed? Have they denied the God that Made them, the Saviour that Redeemed them, or the Holy-Ghost that Sanctifieth and Reformeth them? In brief, have they subverted, or denied any of the great *essentials* of *Christianity*?

4. Do they not Preach the same Matters of *Faith*, *Repentance*, and *Obedience*, that are discoursed and persuaded by the *Conformable Ministers*? Do they not with equal seriousness assert the necessity of them? Do they not press *Self-denial*, *Heavenly-mindedness*, *Mortification*, *Contempt of the World*, *Love to God and Men*, and all the Duties of *Christians* and *Believers*?



vers ? And do they not do this with as much Life and Zeal, with as much Fervour and Affection as they are able, yea, and with such as comes not short of that, of any of their *Conformable Brethren*.

5. If these things be true, why are we not openly confuted and shamed in the Faces of the *World* ? If the Doctrine of our Ministers be false, and of malignant nature, why is there no proof made of it, and why are they not made justly infamous thereby ? But if it be true and sound, and such as is for the *Edification of Christians in Faith and Godliness*, why are they and we Persecuted, and Reproached for it ?

## SECT. 12.

1. In the last place, How will you defend your selves from the Church of *Rome*, when we are ruined and destroyed ? Do you think yourselves sufficient to grapple with those *Philistins*, and make good the *Protestant Cause* against their policy and power ? Are you sufficient to counter-mine all their Counsels, and blow up all their *Hellish Projects* and considerations ? Have you courage and force enough to defend your and our *Princes Crown*, and your own Throats from their Janizaries ?

2. Do you not know, that they will find some considerable numbers, even at home, that will draw their Swords for the ruine of that *Pestilent Heresy* called *Protestantism* ? And will they not spawn Locusts and Caterpillars from abroad in great abundance, to promote that blessed and sacred undertaking ? And have you power more then enough to employ against their Multitudes ? A Learned Dr. of this Church hath lately said, that he expects not to see the *Protestant Cause* survive the ruine of the Church of *England* ; and we will for once make bold to say, that we do not expect to see the Church of *England* long survive the ruine of the *Dissenters*. VVe know you say, you will take care to defend it both from *Protestant* and *Popish Enemies*. From the first we think you, may easily defend it, for we know no evil they intend it ; and we shall be glad, you may as easily protect it from the latter, for we do not desire to see the Church of *England* ruined, and with it the *Protestants Name*, and *Cause* in *Europe*, whatever you may imagine.

3. Do you think the *Popish Malignity* against the Church of *England*, will cease when we are ruined and destroyed ? If the Church of *England* will imbrace the *Romish Doctrines*, it may hope for some kindness and favour from that *Synagogue of Satan*. But if it will retain the old, honest *Protestant Doctrines*, that have been maintained by our *English Worthies*, since the *Reformation*, no abatement of hatred and hateful

Plots

*Plots* for its ruine must be expected. Whilst the *English* Church remains the same, the *Romish* Church will continue the same, 'tis in vain to expect alteration on the one part, without change in the other. The *Romans* Conclave will hate, and design the ruine of the *English* Hierarchy, if there were never a *Dissenter* in the Land. Do not expect Peace and security when we are destroyed. The *Romish* enmity will survive our Funerals. 'Tis implacable and mortal. You may as well expect that an *Ethiopian* should change his Skin, and a *Leopard* his Spots, as that that Church should put off its venome against *Protestants*.

4. If the *Papish* Faction had so plaid their Game, and laid their *Plots*, that they hoped to ruine the *Protestant* Religion, and introduce their own Superstition, when all *Protestants* were united against them, however they might be divided amongst themselves, what will they hope to do when so considerable a part of them are ruined? Will they not conclude (and with good reason too) that they that carry the day, accomplish their Projects, and bring to pass their desired purposes? Will they not say, *Aha! Soul we have it?* We cannot but think, that they will suppose their work half done, when we are destroyed and disabled to assist you in opposing them.

5. Have you forgotten the kind usage the Church of *Ireland* have received from them not many Years ago? 'Twas done in the memory of many of you, and others have had knowledge of it by common Fame and Tradition, and all may know it, that will but consult the *Historians*, that have written concerning it: You may learn from thence, what to expect, if ever an opportunity be offered unto them. There's the *Coppy* after which they intend to write, and in the fate of that *Church*, you may read your own. The *Papists* never cut mens Throats till they have an advantage for it, and then they do it to purpose. When they draw their Swords, they make them drunk in the blood of the Slain.

6. Can those *Butcheries* that were committed upon your own *Country men*, *Friends*, and *Relations*, be ever razed out of your Minds? Can those *Rivers of Blood*, that ran in almost all parts and places of that *Nation* ever be forgotten? Can the *Shrieks* and *Cries* of the *Women* and *Children* that were murdered by those *Incarnate Devils*, ever cease sounding in your ears? Can you ever fail to remember the cruel and barbarous Deaths, that those *Sons of Satan* imposed upon them? Surely we cannot think, that these things are, or will, be passed into *Oblivion*.

7. Do you remember them, and yet will you expose your selves to the same cruelty and rage? Will you make the way to your own Throats as plain and easy as you can? Will you remove all *Obstacles* which may

hinder their approach unto them? What do you do else by *prosecuting, ruining, and undoing* us? Do you not believe that we would defend your Lives and the Life of our *Sovereign*, with the hazard of our own? Do you not think that we would venture all that is near and dear to us, for the preservation of our common *Protestant Faith*? Do you imagine that we would stand by and look on, whilst they sheathed their *Swords* in your *Bowels*, and *Massacred* and destroyed you after their usual Methods? No, no, you cannot be more firm to one another, then we shall be to you all, in the maintenance of the *Protestant Faith*, and that *mighly Monarch* that is the *Defender* of it.

8. 'Tis true, you have laid no great *Obligation* upon us, to assist you against your *Enemies*, and those that seek your ruine. The *Severities* that have been exercised towards us, are not the usual ways and means of engaging the Hearts and Affections of Men. Friendships are seldom made by *Prisons*, *Persecutions*, and *Confiscations*. But though you have not much obliged us, and we be not much indebted to you for your kindness, we owe very much to God, and to our own *Judgments* and *Consciences*, and nothing that you have done, or shall do, shall ever set us at liberty from those *Ties*, and *Bonds*. We shall never abandon the *Protestant Cause*, to the will and lust of its *Enemies*. We will avow, and assert it, by the Grace of God, to the utmost Period of our *Lives*. We are satisfied in our own *Judgments*, that the *Protestant Religion*, is the Religion of Christ Jesus, and that *Papery* is an arrant *Imposture*. In this Religion we have been Born and Bred, in this we have lived, and in this we will dye. No dis-obligations, no, unkindness, no severities, no *Persecutions* that we receive from the Church of *England*, shall ever make us take part with *Rome*, or suspend our lawful assistance for the defence of it.

## SECT. 14.

1. I cannot have done here without one *Expostulation* more: If the *Papists* were of your Council, would they not perswade you to do the very same things that now you do? Would they not encourage you to a vigorous Prosecution of the *Penal Laws* against us? Would they not bid you put fire to the Faggot, and persecute, and destroy us from under the Heavens of the Lord? We do not doubt, but that this would be their counsels, and of this nature their advice: And do you not believe, that they would have regard to their own interest, and hope to promote their own advantages thereby? Doth it seem probable, that they

they would direct to any thing, but what might (in their Opinion) promote the *Catholic* Cause? And would they not think, if they could prevail with you to ruine us, that they had made a fair Progress, and laid a good foundation for a project of equal kindness to your selves, to be accomplished in convenient Season?

2. Are there any men in *England*, so much rejoiced at our present *Sufferings* and *persecutions* as the *Roman Catholics* and some *Bastard Protestants*, that are weary of their Religion, and willing to become their *Profelytes*? They, they are the Men that delight to see our *Houses* rifled and plundered, our *Goods* exposed to Sale, our *Persons* dragged to *Goals*, and laid among *Miscreants* and *Vermin*. They laugh at our *Calamities*, and Triumph in our bitterness and anguish. They find an inward pleasure and Complaisance, in seeing and hearing us Prosecuted by your *Blood-bounds*. Next to the bathing their own hands in our *blood*, nothing is more acceptable unto them, then to see you making some approaches towards it.

3. And have they not some reason for it? Do they not know, that the weakning and ruine of *Protestants* is for the advantage of the *Papacy*? They are well enough skilled in the Mysteries of Policy, and know how to enlarge both *Satan's Kingdom* and their own. They are not ignorant that if the *Protestant Interest in England* decay, their's will advance, and rise upon it's rubbish; and it must needs be a *Spectacle* wonderfully pleasant to them to behold you promoting it, with so much vigilance and endeavour.

4. Do they not know that there are no Men in *England* more tenacious of *Protestant Doctrine*, then the *Dissenters*? Do they not know, that we are equally obstinate in the defence of it, with any of the Members of your Church? Are we not as irreconcilable to *Popery* and *Papists Doctrines*, and *Superstitions*, as those of you that have the greatest, and most accountable *Aversations* for it? And do not the *Romanists* esteem and account us so? Have they any hope to pervert us, or bring us over to espouse their Cause? Does it ever enter into their *Fantasy*, that we will become *Catholics*, or so much as favour their monstrous and prodigious *Impostures*? Do they not reckon us an intractable *Generation*, and have they not long since given us over as *Reprobates*? Despair of prevailing, hath freed us from the trouble of their assaults, and we are secure from their Temptations, because they have no hopes of *profelyting* or *seducing* us.

5. And do you do well and wisely to prosecute us with so much violence and rage? Do you therein, act the part of wise-men, or of good Christians?

Christians? Is it wisdom to destroy your most steady and resolved Friends? Can you do your Enemies a greater kindness or your selves a greater mischief? Do you not thereby cut off your right hand with your left? Do you not thereby impair and weaken your own strength, that they may perfectly and utterly destroy you?

6. Is it the part of Christians to persecute your Brethren, and to worry them like Dogs? Have you any example or encouragement for it in the Gospel, or in the practice of the Primitive Church? Where do you read of any Persecutions raised by Christians, in the purest Ages of it? We read indeed that Gregory and George Bishops of Alexandria did commit great Outrages, and made great slaughter of the Christians there, but they were Arian Hereticks. We read also, that Macedonius Bishop of Constantinople, *κρίσαντιον ἐκίνησε πόλεμον*, raised a Persecution against Christians, but he also was an Heretick, and denyed the Deity of the Holy Ghost. Socrat. lib. 2. cap. 27. In after Ages the Church Christians (we do confess) did too frequently persecute one another, but it had then made great defections from its Original purity, both in Doctrine and manners, and we hope the Church of England will not imitate the impurer, and more corrupt Ages of the Church, and neglect and despise those purer Ages that were more worthy of imitation.

7. However we think for your own sakes, if not for ours you might forbear our ruine. We suppose you may have a kindness for your own Estates and Lives, though you may have none for those of the Dissenters. We do believe that you have no mind to be exiled, proscribed, and beggered, nor to descend in your own blood to your Graves, though peradventure it would be no great affliction to you, to see us do so. If you do not therefore desire your own ruine and destruction, we hope you will not prosecute ours, for we are much assured, that ours is only preparatory to others; perhaps you may laugh at these Predictions, and repute them Enthusiastick Dreams, and we shall rejoice if they prove so. But we have other Apprehensions.